Chilean's Family Blames Authorities in His Death

By Joanne Omang
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SANTIAGO, May 14—The morgue attendant led the hunched young man across the wet tile floor to the block of nine white square metal doors. He opened the bottom middle one and pulled out a tray on which lay what used to be a human being, agricultural technician Cedomil Luis Lausic Glasinovic.

The young man, a friend of Lausic's cousin, nodded. "We'll have to close the casket," he said. His fists were clenched. Luis Lausic, 28, single, died sometime last month of head wounds. But his family learned only last week that he was dead.

In papers filed with the Santiago Court of Appeals, the family has charged the National Intelligence Department (DINA) and the court itself with responsibility for Lausic's death. They say he was arrested April 4 by the Military Intelligence Service, transfered to a reputed torture center called the Villa Grimaldi and killed.

President Augusto Pinochet said in an interview yesterday that the military government has no record of ever arresting anyone by the name of Cedomil Luis Lausic Glasinovic. The wounds, he said, might have resulted from an automobile accident or from a fight, and the death used by opponents of the government as an excuse to make false charges. He promised an investigation.

Lausic's cousin, Teresa Stipetich Glasinovic, 22, came 1,750 miles from her home in Punta Arenas, at Chile's southern tip, to file a writ of habeas corpus on April 9. She asked the court of appeals to find out where the Military Intelligence Service had taken Lausic.

"He'd been unemployed since September 11," she said, referring to the day in 1973 that Pinochet and the army overthrew the leftist government of Salvador Allende. In her filing, she said the intelligence officers also arrested the daughter of Lausic's landlady who happened to be at home when the arrest occurred.

Lausic's mother filed a second writ, on April 22, saying she had learned "unofficially" that her son had been seen in the Villa Grimaldi, used by the DINA, at 8200 Calle Jose Arrieta in Santiago. The detention, she said, was "not only illegal but very dangerous" for her son. She filed a third writ May 5 saying the case was urgent, that her son was in grave danger.

On May 8, church authorities sent word to the family that Lausic's body was in the morgue It had been there, said an attendant, since April 9, five days after his family said he was arrested.

In her final plea, filed May 9, Lausic's mother accuses the court of responsibility for her son's death and asks that the DINA be investigated. The court, she said, had only asked various agencies for reports and papers "as if it were a common bureaucratic procedure."

The funeral was Saturday. "He had no party membership, no affiliation," said his cousin. The family, which emigrated from Yugoslavia two generations ago, seemed stunned. "I still don't believe it," the cousin said.